Developing OER-supportive ICT in education policies for higher education in smaller countries

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http://www.poerup.info
POERUP: summary

• Inventory of more than 400 OER initiatives worldwide
• 30 country reports – 3 more ongoing – all being updated
• 7 case studies including ALISON, OER U and FutureLearn
• 3 generic policy documents: universities, VET and schools
• In progress: Policy documents for UK (x3), Ireland, France, Netherlands, Spain, Poland – and Canada
• Project finishes end June 2014, reports 1 September 2014
Overview of seminar

- What is a “smaller country”?
- Which are the smaller countries, in/near EU?
- How do they differ?
- Some examples of policy formulation mechanisms
Definition

A “small country” is a country with less than 10 million people.
Alternative definitions

- Small countries (COL) < 1.5 million
- Microstate (Wikipedia) < 0.5 million
- We follow “orthostates” (Re.ViCa) < 10 million – full details of this categorisation at http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/All_countries_by_population
Small EU countries, under 5 million

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (9 in total)</th>
<th>Population ‘000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>4662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>4258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>2956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>2062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>1283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Small EU regions and nearby countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region (9 in total)</th>
<th>Population ‘000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flanders (Belgium)</td>
<td>6351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallonia (Belgium)</td>
<td>3546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales (UK)</td>
<td>3064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland (UK)</td>
<td>5295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland (UK)</td>
<td>1811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bremen (Germany)</td>
<td>611 (and 10 more under 5m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Saxony (Germany)</td>
<td>7914 (only 3 Länder above 10m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>5019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>3383 (?) (2004)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors relevant to smaller countries

- less money for extensive research and policy analysis – quantum of action is fixed
- more influence of regional and isolated areas (paradoxically?)
- easier decision-making among universities, at least in theory
- lack of economies of scale, if the national language is country-specific
- greater interest in collaboration on education with some nearby states
- smaller set of institutions, causing issues with generating or maintaining institutional diversity of mission across the HE sector
- potentially greater danger of dominance by private sector interests
- potentially large edge effects of student flows from nearby states, made worse if teaching, funding and regulatory regimes are attractive to incomers
Top educational aims: smaller countries

- Foster the language
- Foster the culture
- Foster research, within the constraints of much research being global and much research in science being published in English
Developing policies
for smaller countries
(and with a focus on higher education)
Another constraint: universities are universal

But university culture is specific
(as is pervasiveness and use of IT)
A worked example

Wales, in the UK context
Scotland, Wales and Ireland

• Brief pen-pictures
• Only Wales gone into in detail – as it has the most interesting outcome – so far
• POERUP analysis complemented by recent work for UK Higher Education Academy on Flexible Learning Barriers and Enablers in HE
Scotland

- Population: 5.295 million
- Semi-autonomous part of UK, full autonomy in all sectors of education
- **Scottish Independence Referendum in September 2014** – all HE policies are on hold and some HE questions unanswered
- Universities: 15 (and three other HEIs)
- Hegemon: no overall hegemon but the “ancients” wield much influence
- Significant cross-border flows including in distance learning
- No recent investment in operational aspects of IT in HE from the Ministry
- No major involvement in UK (actually England) JISC/HEA OER programme, except for evaluation
- No member of OER U
- Some Scottish research-led universities now in FutureLearn
Scottish Open Education Declaration

• Broader than OER (wise, increasingly done)
• Based closely on UNESCO OER declaration
• Not owned, yet, by Ministry or sector actors
• Not visibly correlated with SFC policy related to the HE area
• But a useful start to a process, which no doubt will accelerate, in one or other direction, after the Referendum in September 2014
Ireland (Eire)

- Population: 4.593 million
- Separate nation, but some Eire-UK associations e.g. SCONUL, and Ireland-wide wide associations also
- Universities: 7 Universities, 14 Institutes of Technology, 7 Colleges of Education, and some specialised HE providers
- Hegemon: no overall hegemon, nor in distance learning
- Little IT-based educational innovation in public sector HE, but note the private Hibernia College – and next...
- One Eire HEI in FutureLearn, one other in OER U
- The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 makes no mention of OER or open education, few mentions of e-learning
And now to... Wales

- Population: 3.064 million
- Semi-autonomous part of UK, full autonomy in education
- Universities: 8 (was 11) – directive former minister
- Hegemon: no overall hegemon though in distance learning the UKOU is dominant
- Significant cross-border flows
- Substantial (for Wales) recent investment in IT in HE
- Significant policy development also
General approach of POERUP

• Try to work with focal points within the country interested in OER and policy
• Be open as to our mission of writing an OER in HE policy for the country,
• but say you would prefer it if they drew on POERUP resources and advice to write their own
# Wales vs New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wales</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pop: 3.1 million – part of UK</td>
<td>Pop: 4.4 million – on its own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI/c: $29420</td>
<td>GNI/c: $35,950 (UK) * 0.92?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OER U members: 1 (uni)</td>
<td>OER U members: 7 (1 uni)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OER WG: yes</td>
<td>OER WG: no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat’l e-learning prog: recent</td>
<td>Nat’l e-learning prog: no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy supportive of eL: yes</td>
<td>Policy supportive of eL: no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy supportive of DL: yes?</td>
<td>Policy supportive of DL: no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coursera members: no</td>
<td>Coursera members: no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Leverage on relationships

- Led the HE Academy team benchmarking e-learning for Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Swansea Met, Aberystwyth, Bangor and Glyndŵr in Benchmarking and Gwella Phase 1
- Gwella Phase 2 consultant for Aberystwyth and Glamorgan
- JISC Capacity Building consultant to Trinity St David
- Consultant to Aberystwyth on e-learning research
- External consultant member of e-Learning Steering Group, Glamorgan: recent focus on strategy, VLE selection and OUE market research
- Consultant to Wales study on Definition of Open, Distance, Drop-in and e-Learning in post-16
Existing HE policy in Wales #1

- Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology: a Strategy for Higher Education in Wales: “a ten year strategy for the enhancement of learning and teaching through technology for higher education (HE) in Wales from 2007/08 to 2016/17”
Existing HE policy in Wales #2

- HEFCW Corporate Strategy 2013-14 – 2015-16:
  - “increased emphasis on innovative flexible learning, community and work-based provision”
  - “we will implement our part-time action plan and develop new innovative approaches for supporting flexible and part-time provision”
POERUP-specific interventions


• And may need to play a long game that does not fit well with EU project timescales: The Online Learning Innovation Fund – implications for Wales - 14 October 2009, Cardiff
Open & online: Wales, higher education and emerging modes of learning

Report of the Online Digital Learning Working Group (set up by the Minister), March 2014
Recommendations to the Minister

1. **Widening access to higher education to sectors with low participation**
   - Fund the development of O&O resources for use in schools and colleges, with the aim of raising aspirations of learners from low participation backgrounds.
   - Investigate the use of Hwb as a host for the O&O resources developed, with the intention of establishing a central repository.
   - Extend the work of the Open University OpenLearn Champions project to cover the whole of Wales via the Reaching Wider Partnerships.

2. **Developing skills for the workplace and the Welsh economy**
   - Examine how online learning should be integrated into the approach for programmes funded through the European Social Fund.

3. **Developing Welsh language skills for employment**
   - Develop a Welsh language skills MOOC at higher education level so that students and work-based learners can develop their professional Welsh language skills and potentially seek certification for those skills.
Recommendations to HEIs

4. **Reviewing institutional policies, monitoring developments and exploiting opportunities**
   - Agree what the institution’s overall approach to open and online resources should be, monitor external O&O developments, and exploiting opportunities to produce and use resources.

5. **Strengthening institutional reputation and brand**
   - Exploit open and online resources in appropriate circumstances to showcase the quality of learning opportunities.
Recommendations to Minister & HEIs

6. **Improving the skills of higher education staff**
   - Institutions should provide academic staff with the skills and support they need to make most effective use of open and online approaches to learning.
   - HEFCW should continue to contribute to the costs of Jisc’s programme on open and online resources and take advantage of Jisc’s expertise.

7. **Licensing and sharing open educational resources**
   - The Government should encourage the systematic adoption of open licensing for open educational resources produced by HEIs in Wales.
   - Where possible staff and institutions should release open educational resources using an appropriate Creative Commons licence.
   - Institutions should make open educational resources widely available, including via the Jorum repository.
Now you think about it?

- Funding
- Purpose/projects
- Costs and business case
- Licenses
- Accreditation of prior learning
- Quality
- Staff development
- Further research
- Local aspects – languages, culture, inclusion, rural etc
Any questions?

Speak now
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Thank you for listening

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http://poerup.referata.com/wiki/Main_Page